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NOTICE OF CERTAIN MANUSCRIPT PAPERS FOUND
IN THE WALL OF AN OLD HOUSE
IN THE SHORE WYND IN SEPTEMBER, 1887,

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JAMES CAMERON.

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MONTROSE 160 YEARS AGO.

The papers found on the occasion of alterations being made in an old house in Shore Wynd (Sept., 1887) consist chiefly of signed receipts and discharged accounts relative to the affairs of two ship captains, Alexander Stevenson and William Beattie, the remainder being documents of a legal nature and not immediately concerning either. Considering the lengthened period of their concealment they are, though browned with age and stained with damp, in a remarkably well-preserved state ; and few of them, unless where defective, give much trouble to the decipherer. Among the collection there are many excellent specimens of the penmanship of those days, whose execution would not disgrace a teacher of the art, and if the spelling is somewhat peculiar it is in such examples always self-consistent and free from the blotches and blunders of ignorance and carelessness, or the headlong haste and distracting worry of the progressive times in which we live. And if individual character may be inferred from individual handwriting, we might predicate of that generation from these long-lived relics of its own handiwork that it was sensible and prudent, capable and conscientious.

Stevenson's papers range in date from 1716 to 1729 ; Beattie's from 1730 to 1736 ; and as the one comes into view just when the other has disappeared, it is reasonable to suppose that the one succeeded the other in the command of the same vessel, though there is no direct evidence bearing upon the point.

The master mariner of last century was apparently something more than a mere carrier of other men's merchandise. From their accounts it is evident that both of these worthies entered largely into business on their own account, and their respective spouses were seemingly as managing and competent as themselves, their home trade being necessarily almost entirely under the control of the wives. It was in both cases a sort of dual partnership, the husband

roaming over the sea in the service of employers no doubt, but still with some private means of his own and the best opportunity of making a profitable investment of them; whilst his better half was improving the periods of his absence in dispensing the utilities and luxuries of life to the community around her with all the advantages of a privileged importer. It may easily be inferred that such a mode of living was lucrative. A career of ten years would enable a skilful and prudent captain, if only he were so fortunate as to escape the disasters incident to his profession—and they were much more serious then than now—to retire from active life in comparative affluence. Such being the case, it is evident also that persons of good family would be attracted to it. Stevenson himself, there is some reason to believe, was very respectably connected. In one of the law papers in the collection mention is made of a namesake, Alexander Stevenson of Montgreenan, a writer to the Signet—probably a near relative. A young Carnegy whose father was, judging from an epistle of his, a gentleman of position in the neighbourhood, was apprentice to the seafaring business under Capt. William Ouchterlony, himself a member of a very respectable and indeed ancient family, as sundry noteworthy tombs in our local graveyards show, if such evidence were needed; and not to multiply instances, "Androu Scott" of Usan was another "honest skiper" of familiar name and fame, though he belonged to a generation still earlier than that with which we are more immediately concerned. Of Beattie's family connections there is nothing to report beyond the fact that his cousin, Robert Beattie, was Dean of Guild in 1730, as is shown in a receipt given to the Captain for the dues paid by the latter on his being made a "Burgher."

Stevenson appears first as captain of the "Hopefull Jean"—a homely and pleasant name, and—no small matter—one which would help—such is the subtle influence of names on sailors and soldiers alike, and on mankind generally, to attach her crew to their vessel. Who the particular lady thus complimented may have been is, to day at least, a very small matter; but as it had been no small one to somebody, we may indulge in a little speculation as its origin. The ship was owned by five persons conjointly, two of whom, named Millar, owning between them three-fourths of the whole, the remaining shares being held by James

Lyall, Robert Peattrie, and Robert Taylor. Now there is a Jean Millar who figures prominently in these accounts as an inn-keeper, or vintner probably, not, however, as wife of either of these principal owners, for she was a Mrs Christie, but in all likelihood as a sister of theirs, and in fine she may have been the "original and only genuine" Hopefull Jean of whom we are in search. Herein she manifests a pleasure and a pride in her birth name, and a determination to stick to it in spite of marriage, and there is no way of accounting for so remarkable a peculiarity except such a connection with prominent citizens of the day as we have indicated.

There is no note in these papers of the tonnage of the vessel or the number of her crew, but we may gather some information regarding the provisions supplied to her and the nature and extent of the trade in which she was engaged. From an account dated 1720 we make a discovery of rather a singular nature. The item alluded to runs as follows:—"To a barle of herrings for beef to the ship, £9," the money of course Scots, and equal to 15s sterling, or "starling," as the accounts invariably have it when it occurs at all. From another we have—"To butter, kell, and other small things." From another—"To ship's brid, beaken, and header,"—the "brid" being "biskit," of which a hundredweight is charged 9s. The "header" of this item, though placed in close contiguity with edibles was probable intended for bedding rather than for internal consumption. As to liquids, (tea of course was at that time much too expensive for sailor use) it is a remarkable fact that in all these papers and accounts, although there is a great variety of articles enumerated, there nowhere occurs any mention of coffee, except indeed in one document, a Dutch account of crockery ware, in which appears the line—"1 dosen coffe copes and pleats"—the "pleats," no doubt, being intended for use as coolers or "saucers." Beer or ale, whether of home or foreign manufacture, seems to have been the customary beverage, both ashore amongst the commoner sort of people and afloat amongst sailors. No occasional work was performed or service rendered without an allowance of beer or ale; and indeed the cost of such refreshments formed no inconsiderable proportion of the wages paid for such labour and service. Nor indeed is there any mention of *whiskey*,

either under that familiar name or any other with which the prince of Scotch intoxicants can be identified. As illustrative of the habits of our ancestors in this respect we give an unabridged account of date 1732.—

To ye boy and Robert Fern for scraping ye ship round 2 pynts and 1 bottle, ...	7	6
To ye men 3 pynts and 3 bottles at severall times, ...	10	6
For draying ye sails 3 pynts, ...	3	0
To Jas. Orknay 3 bottles for having ye ship of from full sea, ...	4	6
For heaving ye ship to ye pier 4 pynts, ...	4	0
To ye sailors 3 pynts, ...	3	0
To them 3 bottles, ...	4	0
To drink to the fishermen for bringing you in, ...	12	0

—the money no doubt being meant for Scots, and if the drink was cheap it must be remembered that a labourer's wages was less than 7d (6s 8d) a-day, whilst a tradesman's was no more than 9d or 10d at most.

An important and favourable change took place in Captain Stevenson's circumstances as the result of his acquiesence in a proposal made to him in the following communication, dated 1st October 1724 :—

Sir,—We subscrivers hereby impour and commisionat you to buy for yourself ane ship about fifty tons burden British built. And we promiss and engage ourselves to hold part with you thereof conform to the shares annexed to our (respective) subscriptions and to answer and pay your draughts on us for our severall shares of the said ship : make the best bargain ye can for your own and our advantage and oblige, your verry humble servants,

Eliz. Straton, one eight part.
Jo Stivenson on sixten part.
David Preshow one eight part.
Alex. Stenson one eight part.
Allex. Millne, jun., on sixteen pairt.
James Sutor one six'een pairt.
George Beattie for his son
Alexander Beattie on sixteen pairt.

To Mr Alex. Stenson, mariner in Montrose.

Notime was lost in putting this project into execution, a suitable vessel having been procured at Leith in January of the following year. If a second-hand craft she must have been dismantled, as there is a separate and detailed account of the hull, 3 masts,

3 anchors, a boom, sailcloth, ropes &c., and that she was not in sailing trim is evident from the fact that there is a Montrose account relating to her outfit in which occurs an item of 6s each to the men for rigging the ship, amounting to 24s of sterling money, which at 6s 8d scots a-day for each man would give about a fortnights' employment to four men. It may interest the reader to note here the weight and cost of the anchors as affording some suggestion of the size of the ship, and at the same time a point of comparison with modern prices. The largest was about 3 cwt., 2 qrs., and is valued at £4 14s 9d; another, 2 cwt., 3 qrs., value £3 8s 9d; and the third designated a "Caege" or "Cadge" anchor (it is spelled both ways) furnished by David Forrester of Leith, "weghting one hound. and fourtey pound," cost £1 9s 5d "starling monay" (one pound nine shilons and five pinc starling monay).

In a letter from "David Prichow," dated at Leith in May, 1725, and addressed to Mrs Stevenson, whom he calls "Cousine," there is a statement of accounts between himself and the Captain in which he accepts one share (a sixteenth part) of the "Suckcessfull Beatty," (otherwise Beatey or Betty, such was the ship's name) as part of the balance in his favour, and the value of this is given as £19 17s 3d. This would give a total value of £317 16s for the new vessel—a result that quite corresponds with the detailed statement to which reference has already been made.

In April of the same year he sailed to Stockholm with a cargo of Codfish (306¼ barrels bulk) and skins, and returned with "79 barrs of fine midlin Iron," a barrel of "Tarr," and 2 dozen double deals. In this instance the freight on the outward cargo amounted to £26 0s 5d.

About the middle of July, Captain Stevenson made a trip to London, having on this occasion a Commission from a respectable firm of dealers and exporters in Montrose to dispose of certain useful commodities for them in the big city, as the following interesting letter shows :—

Mr Alex. Stienson,

SIR,—We have herewith delivered you 5 pounds 9¼ ounces Rhubarb, 7½ ounces "Contray erva," 7¼ ounces Jallop, which you will do us the favour to stow in the most convenient place of the ship you can, and when you come to London cause take it ashore in the sailors'

pockets in small parcells and then dispose on it to any druggist for the most you can gett, and you may either pay in the nett proceeds to J—— C——, or send us a bill for the same, payable in this place, which will much oblige, sir, your humble servants,

(signed) R—— & S——.

To this is added as a postscript—"You will buy 200 of the best hoggeshed hoopes and bring with you."

In the following year we find him again in the Baltic and apparently gathering a cargo for the home voyage in Dantzic and Rotterdam. The following bill will illustrate the Dantzic trade :—

To 4 Coayls of Rope 334 (pound) att 14 guilders.
A bowline 293 pound att &c.
130 pound wight of Junk.
5½ caggs of black bear.
A cagg of pickled Couckemors.
A firecan of Soap.
A hamborrow line.
12 skeans of Marlin.
12 skeans of housing.
3 skeans of twine.
An anchor of brandy.
660 pound of Junk.
2 dusan of hanckrs.

The "black bear" in the above list of imports is, we presume, a kind of potable liquor resembling porter. "Couckemors" are, of course, cucumbers. But the "Junk" is a dubious article, as the term signifies *salt beef* and also *old ropes*; probably the latter are intended.

The trade with Holland embraced such articles as mace, cinnamon, cloves, nutmegs, tea (of two sorts—Bohea and green, the former purchased at 6 guilders the "pond," and the latter at 3½ guilders the "pond,"), brandy (at twelve guilders the "anher"), and earthenware. A guilder is equal to one shilling and eightpence sterling, the Exchange being ordinarily 22½; and the Dutch "pond" equals 2·2 English pounds.

The following homely letter, addressed to "Mrs Stenstin" by a lady friend, further illustrates the intimate commercial relations that subsisted between Montrose and Holland during the earlier part o last century :—

Att Roterdam, Nobr. 13, 1726.

This is to Lett you know that I have sentt you your Lentt, v hundred wight of Lentt 25 guilders, and ye bundls of packthreed 13 guilders, and the pack of Tepe and stringing according to your Decretion is 15 guilders and 2 pence. I hop you will be so kind as to Lett my sister know that I have not bought all her things, but so farr as her money come to. I have bought 2 Duch stome (stone) which is a crown. I bought her the Lentt as well as I could. I could have gott other Lentt but nott so good as ill be 8 guilders in the hundred, and the goods is marked *A* and *S*. No more att presentt.

Restt your humble servant,

Margratt Johnstoun.

Most of Captain Beattie's papers consist of accounts with home merchants. These afford an insight into the current prices of a considerable variety of articles, between the years 1730 and 1734; and the following are a few gleanings, the rates being given in sterling money :—

Biscuit, 9s a cwt.; linseed oil, 20d per pint (Scotch); Bohea tea, 7s 7d per lb. (wholesale); "Chiri wine," 15d per bottle; "Whitwine," 12d; claret, 16½d; oranges, 10d per dozen; canvas, from 8d to 16d per yard; twine, 16d per lb.; soap, 4½d per lb.; okum, 1½d per lb.; a barrel of herrings, 15s; stockings (men's), 2s 6d a pair; small beer, 6s per half a hogshead; ale, 1½d per bottle, or 3d a pint; refined sugar, 7¾d per lb. (wholesale); "a boll of bear," 11s 1½d; "a mell of coals," 3s 2d. To these may be added—Cartage of 3 loads of peats for 5 miles, 2s 6d; 4 months' "sess" for trade, 4s; rent of a "Laigh" house with offices and "heall yeard" attached, £2 1s 8d. And if one were ambitious to become a "Burgher" he had to pay £13 6s 8d as "Guildrie dues."

It will be convenient to allude in this place to an account of one of the most respectable merchants in town, as illustrating the mixed nature of the trade of those days. The first two items are silk and silk thread, both retailed by weight in small quantities in this instance (so many "drops"). The next is buckram ("buckrome"), sold by the yard; and, so far, the merchant keeps in a certain line of goods. But the fourth item is *brimstone*, a commodity then indispensable to every household, but which one now-a-days would not expect to obtain at a silk mercer's. The last item is "hops," which is again a surprise, as it is neither animal, like silk, nor

mineral, like brimstone; but vegetable, which is a considerable jump from either.

In 1733 a house was built to Captain Beattie's order, where located or of what dimensions record saith not; but about that date there is a wright's bill in which occurs an entry of 120 "pens of glas," which one should imagine would be sufficient to enlighten a three storey tenement. The rate of charge was 8d per square foot, and from other accounts it would seem that from 3½d to 6d was the usual cost of a single "pen" according to the quality of the "glas."

Operations towards the accomplishment of this undertaking began about the middle of January, and were continued with apparently little interruption until 5th May. A very formidable bill for drink was accumulating during the progress of this work; and the purveyor, a Mr Burnett, shows a particularity in noting in his account the varying occasions and circumstances of each supply that well illustrates the "sickarness" of the Scotch character in matters pecuniary. There are sixty-seven entries in all, and the "suma" amounts to £16 8s 6d scots—the only drink mentioned being ale. Masons (especially), wrights, slaters, barrowmen, and self—all come in for their respective shares with as much regularity as if ale were at that period the currency of the country. Though it is thus nothing but drink, drink, and that confined to the plebeian potation, Mr Burnett has contrived to render his bill almost interesting. The following is a specimen of the entries :—

Feb. 10. To Masons, Wrights, and Sclaters, 5 pynts, ... 15s
To ye barowman, 1 botell, ... 1s 6d
17. To ye 2 hours, Masons and Wrights, 6 p., ... 18s
Mar. 2nd. Your self, Will Strachon, and Alex. Bone, 5 botells, ... 7s 6d
12th. On botell vith ye Sclaters, ... 1s 6d
17th. To Masons and Wrights at night, 20 b.,... ... ... 30s
Aprile 23rd. Morning and Night to ye Vrights, 2 p.,... ... ... 6s
To your oun Chamber on botell, 1s 6d

Such are a few of the entries, und when we come to 4th May we have a new entry, "To your own house on pynt," implying that at that date he had attained occupation—in fact the final entry in this

account is dated on the following day. It is noteworthy that Captain Beattie was on most of these occasions a sharer with the workmen in the refreshments so generously furnished for them at his expense; and herein we perceive a feature of the 'good old times' that no longer holds a place in society in this part of the world at least. The bill, striking as it must appear to modern eyes, is no evidence of low habits or intemperate indulgence on the part of our ancestors; but it affords proof of something else which is more creditable to human nature than any amount of that punctiliousness and adroitness which may be held to differentiate the present from the past no less than does our proficiency in sciences and arts. Not only was labour—poorly paid labour—solaced by ale, but engagements were ratified and bargains clinched in a fashion which manifested, as it promoted, the mutual satisfaction and contentment of the negotiators. This curiously comes out in a note which Captain Beattie himself has added to a signed receipt of date 16th April, 1733.

"NOTE yt I likewise paid ye above Ja. Butchart for twelve dealls and a piece of Ocak Timber laying under the Hill markt WB, the vallwe of the whole sum being 13s 6d st., before Mrs Stienson *att a mutchken of orangwine.*"

Of the remaining documents I shall transcribe only one, as that one exhibits a style of expression and a mode of spelling which looks much farther back than the first half of the eighteenth century. Unfortunately it is slightly defective. It has been penned by one quite at home in such tasks—*currente calamo*—whole words, and those the most crabbed and involved, having evidently been dashed off with one continuous movement of the hand:—

"Upon thie —ttien day of Apriell, on thousand — hundred and therttie four yirs, I, James Mill. Consttbll, bay uertou of hies Ma-gestties Justteses of peace of thie Shier of forfar ther warand, Lafulliy soumond, warnd, and cherged Robr. Jape, bruer att thie mour fiett; John hill. bruer at thie Nord Uattr Siyd; Allxendr Uhitt, bruer att thie Nord Uattr Siyd; to compier before thie (saids) Justteses or ther Coram in the neu Consell hous of Monttros on freydey, the nintteen day of Apryell Insttntt bie ten of Cilok in thie for nouen in thie our of caues to ansuer at the insttns of Sir Allexondr Uadrborn, Collektter of hies

Maegestties exeis for thie causes Liyblled. Uith (sertification) this I died thie abou dett baiy dlliuring all of them uretten copies sined uith may oun hand, thiy bing personlliy aprehended by me.

James Mill, Consttbll."

Here the meaning is perfectly plain, no word being doubtful, and every letter is in the original individually distinguishable. It will thus be seen that the document has a style and method of its own, and one which cannot reasonably be attributed to eccentricity in the writer. One peculiarity of this style is that the characters *v* and *w* are wanting, *u* doing duty for both, as in the words, "uertou" and "uattr." When *ou* has the sound of *oo* the two letters are placed so as to appear as it intended for *ai*, only that the dot is awanting. This is the case in the words "mour," "abou," and "nouen." The terminal *y* is preceded by *i*, as in "thiy" "baiy," "personalliy." The sound of *ee* is expressed by the combination *ie*, as in "fiett," "hies," "thie," "compier," and "maegestties." The character *t*, except at the commencement of a word, is, it appears, invariably doubled; and the same holds good with regard to the *l*. Such are a few of the singularities of this unique document; and it may be added that in such respects, as well as in certain others, it is markedly different from an instrument of the same nature, dated March, 1731, in which John Warden appears as constable.

As an appendix to the foregoing notice, a list of names culled from these papers is here given from which some of our contemporaries will be gratified to discover that they had ancestors so long ago as 1730 or earlier; but such is the indifference of unpropertied gentiles, in this country at least, to genealogical considerations, that we venture to rest its claims to their attention simply as being, as it appears to us, a choice selection of Scottish family appellatives, very free from admixture with Gaelic, Irish, Welsh, distinctively English, or other more foreign and outlandish adulterations. Included are a few Brechiners and others in their vicinity whose names do no discredit to this roll of forgotten worthies who lived and moved and had their being in the then most fashionable town of the "Shier" of Forfar:—

Straton	Scott	Walace
Carnegy	Coutts	Peddie
Johnston	Sutor	Durie

Murison	Peattrie	Ogilvie
Mill	Skinner	Stone
Preshow	Stout	Warden
Ramsay	Smith	Black
Milne	Dunbar	Glen
Steill	Butchart	Barrie
Strachan	Burnett	Rob
Millar	Burnes	Pearson
Ouchterlony	Edgar	Doig
Lyall	Wilkie	Findlay
Jameson	Anderson	Knox
Lindsay	Orknay	Wishart
Beattie	Melvil	Edward
Allan	Alexander	Whyte
Christie	Hamptone	Moleson
Taylor	Fothringham	Wood
Spence	Fairweather	Hill
Renny	Henderson	Mather
Stevenson	Hutchen	Mathie
Webster.		

NOTE ON THE OUCHTERLONY FAMILY.

"The Ouchterlonys of Guynd came to Forfarshire in or about 1230. Down to 1614 they were of Kelly in the parish of Arbirlot, which they sold to Irvine of Drum, who built Kelly Castle. At the same time they acquired the lands of Guynd, which remained the family estate till the death of John in 1843, when it passed to a nephew, Mr Pierson. He also and recently his wife are both deceased, leaving no family."—(News par).

The following (doubtless imperfect) list of Ouchterlonys interred in either of the older cemeteries of the town shows the intimate connection maintained with Montrose by this important family during several generations prior to its extinction in 1854:—

Robert Ouchterlony, d. 1816, aged 79.
Anne Renny (his wife), d. 1787, aged 53.
Their Children:—
Robert Ouchterlony, died 1827, aged 51.
(Mary Munds, his wife, d. 1853, aged 56).
James Ouchterlony, died 1820, aged 52.
Alithea B. P. Ouchterlony, died 1826.

Mary O. (Mrs Jas. Walker), d. 1854, aged 81.
Ann O. (Mrs Jas. Mitchell), d. 1773, aged 40.
Rev. Robert O., A.M., (d. 1787?) aged 88.
Mrs Wm. O. (Jean Gordon), d. 1753, aged 68.

The above had an Episcopal connection ; those that follow were presumably adherents of the Church of Scotland.

John O., died 1807.
Mary Ruperta Skinner (his wife), d. 1830.
Their Daughters :—
Elizabeth, died 1825.
Margaret, d. 1843.
Anne, d. 1850.
Henrietta, d. 1853.

John Ouchterlony, Esq. of the Guynd, died 29th November, 1843, in the 70th year of his age—at that date the last male representative of the family, and as such appropriately memorialised by the broken column which marks the place of his interment in the Old Churchyard.

The William Ouchterlony mentioned in the above list is in all probability identical with the Captain William Ouchterlony of the papers which have passed under our review. His wife, whose decease is here chronicled, would be, in 1733, of the age of 48 years.

The Henrietta Ouchterlony, one of the daughters of that John Ouchterlony who died in 1807, and of Mary Ruperta Skinner, was, it seems, an accomplished artist, as her name occurs as painter on a coloured lithograph of a view of the town of Montrose as it appeared in the early years of the present century. This picture, now in the possession of Mr David Low of Murray Street, is of large size, and is in an excellent state of preservation. Regarded pictorially, as a town scene it could not easily be surpassed ; whilst to Montrosians of the present generation it must have a special and peculiar interest. The point of view is on the high ground on the south side of the river, exactly opposite to and overlooking the erections on the eastern end of the Island. The harbour is lively with shipping, but not a commencement even has yet been made to the quayage that now lines the strand. The Shore Hill boldly confronts the spectator, whilst a little to the north and east the Windmill Hill, crowned with its appropriate edifice in going order, attains an equal elevation. Immediately beyond the Shore Hill the commodious Parish Church with its diminutive steeple is a prominent object, the gradual slope between it and the bridge-end being entirely occupied with substantial dwelling-houses mostly of two storeys. An

excellent view is afforded of the old wooden bridge with a section of the placid Basin beyond it on the extreme left, its surface dotted with small boats in the distance, which serves effectually to indicate its extent. On the high ground still farther north, besides several homesteads that might be named, the lime-kiln is shadowed forth with an appendage that it has long ago lost—a wreath of smoke towering towards heaven, and swaying westward as it ought to do to be consistent with other manifest indications of how the wind blows. To the immediate foreground the fair artist has given, with artist licence, a pleasing pastoral aspect not devoid of certain elements of the romantic. But the pen cannot cope with the pencil in the pourtrayal of the charms of landscape, so we shall put a period to this description of Mistress Henrietta's masterpiece, grateful to her at the same time for preserving for us so attractive a memorial of our native town as it appeared in her youthful days, and of its environments.

This connection of the Ouchterlonys with Montrose, whilst it may be considered a contributing cause of the prosperity of the town, may also be regarded as an indication of the prominent position it held as a centre of business activity and fashion during the period to which these notes have reference. It no longer enjoys the same happy pre-eminence over neighbouring communities, and it may be that causes similar to those which lead to the decline of nations are in part answerable for the decay of individual townships. The racecourse, the ball-room, the playhouse, the gaming table, the wine bottle—gay assemblies and interesting kettledrums—have had their day in Montrose, if tradition fables not, and have left it flaccid in muscle and relaxed in nerve, and with an enfeebled (monetary) circulation. If this be so the effects of such an enervating course of indulgence and folly will in time pass away if they have not already passed, and the *vis medicatrix naturae* will kindly do the rest. Riches will again flow in upon us, whether from cod-fish or yarn it matters not, and bloom return to the faded rose of our escutcheon; and may truthfulness in word and integrity in act be more and more known as the chief admiring graces of our compatriots !

NOTE II.—LITERAL AND VERBAL COMMENTS.

In this the concluding part of our notice I propose to deal with a subject which has already been slightly touched upon (page 10), but which from its interest and importance is judged worthy of a separate and more extended treatment. This subject may, from its nature, be suitably entitled—Some observations on our native language as it was spoken and written by our ancestors. Whatever opinions are here expressed, whatever assertions hazarded, are entirely self-originated and claim no authority from any names renowned in philological research. We shall put all such names reverently aside and discuss the matter *de novo*, trusting for the acceptance of our statements to the accuracy of the facts we adduce, and the reasonableness of our deductions from them.

Different languages have different alphabets, the Hebrew differing from the Greek and the Greek from the Roman, and even those languages which derive in common and immediately from the Roman, the French, Spanish, Italian, and modern English, differ amongst themselves in this important respect, that whilst their alphabets are alike to the eye they necessarily differ somewhat to the ear, the elementary sounds entering into the spoken language of each nationality not being identical with those that compose the others.

The Greek alphabet contained no h, and for the adequate reason that it is not in itself vocal, as any one may ascertain by attempting to pronounce it aloud. It has the effect of modifying the character of the vowel which it precedes, the breath in taking such vowel being made semi-vocal in its passage through the throat. It contained no j, k following i; and although the Latins introduced this letter it had not with them, I apprehend, the same consonantal power that it has with us *now-a-days*. It was a form of the i, and for that reason follows it in alphabetical order, and its power with them would be fairly represented by our y. *Major* would thus be pronounced mayor (mah-yor). All scholars know that we adopt the sacred name Jesus and the name Jacob directly from the Latin, or, so little is the difference, from the Greek itself; and they are equally aware that these names would be correctly

represented with Y as their initial letter. The name Yacoob is indeed common in the East to this day. In like manner the female name Jezebel would be pronouced Yezebel, and we still retain this pronunciation, or, in other words, fall back upon the i sound in the slightly contracted form of the wo d Isebel, or Isabel. The identity of these two letters will appear more evident from what follows. In an old volume of divinity, published in quarto in the year 1632 (255 years ago), the sheets composing the work, besides being paged in the ordinary way with corner numbers, are marked at the bottom with the letters of the alphabet, the first sheet bein ' marked a, the second b, and so on to z, and this solely with the view of assisting the folder and the binder. In the alphabet as there given there is no j, k following i; and in the body of the work Jews is printed *Iewes*. In old account books, where sums of money are set down in letters instead of Arabic numerals, viij would stand for 8, the final i being written in the j form. On a gravestone of last century in the Old Churchyard a favourite text from Job is quoted in full and it contains the pronoun I twice; in both instances this pronoun is expressed by the letter j and doubtless it is on this account (the letter being thus made conspicuous) that we invariably capitalise this pronoun, there being no reason in the nature of things why it should be so treated more than *we* or *he* or any other pronoun. In an old epitaph in Latin in the Episcopal Churchyard the word *obiit* (died) occurs; but here the second i is expressed by j which it would be impossible to regard as anything else than i.

In one of our old papers there was an occasion for the use of j in the word, Majesty's, but it will be remembered that it was expressed by "Maegestie's" though even here it must not be concluded that the g in this word had a similar power to that of our modern j. It was probably hard, as I believe it to have been invariably hard with the Romans as of course it was with the Greeks.

Referring to the same document in which the word "Maegestie's" occurs, I pointed out that the letters v and w are both wanting u doing duty for both. I have now to show that these are merely forms of the same letter. In the old quarto volume already called in evidence I find that x follows u in the alphabet

there given, leaving thus only 23 letters instead of 26 as with us. If either v or w was then used it was in accordance with this omission not accounted an independent letter and that being so, not entitled to a place in the alphabet. That w is v appears from these instances:—wine, from *vinum*; wasp, from *vespis;* worms, from *vermis*; wench, from *venus*; weight, from *vectum*; woe (wae, Sc.) from *vae*; worry, from *voro*, &c., only observe, the Romans pronounced these v's as oo. In an epitaph at Marykirk the word 'wolat' (flies) occurs for *volat* In one in the Old Churchyard the words *though* and *consumed* are both spelled with w instead of u; and strange to say in the case of the word *know* this practice is reversed, the w being represented by u and that for the simple reason that the u in this instance leads to no other letter.

That v was a mode of writing u and meant no more will appear from the fact that the letter which we name "double u" is invariably written and printed both in its simple and capital forms by doubling the form of the v and not not that of the u. It is more usual in old inscriptions to meet with the v form than with the u form where u is intended, as in 'pvtis' for *puts*, and in some 17th century inscriptions the v is invariably used instead of u. Add to this that the old Scotch pronunciation of *dove*, *love* and *brave* was dou, lou and braw—"braw lads" signifying *brave lads.*

In Burns's finest lyric, "Bruce's Address," the poet commences with "Scots wha hae;" but older Scots than those of Burns's days would have written *quha* for wha as also *quhan* for *whan* (when) and *quhile* for while. This old spelling of our ancestors enables us to fix the derivation of such words as *who* and *when*, as it points directly to the Latin *qui* or *quae* and *quando*—words, it is needless to say, of precisely the same import with the English relative and adverb.